



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
70th Anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal
Admiral Cecil Haney
Tuesday, 07 AUG, 2012
Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
As Prepared for Delivery**

Your Excellency Governor General Kabui, Honorable Prime Minister Lilo, and people of the Solomon Islands, General Amos, Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, Ambassador Taylor, ambassadors, secretaries, ministers, high commissioners, fellow military leaders from the Pacific region, honored guests and military members, including the crew of USS Sampson, and especially our World War II veterans, thank you for being here today for the 70th Anniversary of the Guadalcanal Campaign and Veteran's Day of the Solomon Islands.

Gen. Amos has provided you a great summary of the heroic Guadalcanal campaign. For six months the combined effort of American Forces, including the United States Marine Corps, Navy, Army and Coast Guard, joined forces with our close allies from Australia, New Zealand and native scouts from here in the Solomon Islands, to fight together as partners in the Pacific Theater. During the campaign, we fought alongside each other through three major land battles, seven naval battles and nearly constant, day in and day out, aerial battles. Heroes from each of our nation's fought, sacrificed, and ultimately won here at Guadalcanal.

Earlier this year, we commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea where Allied forces halted the Japanese southern advance. Just a few months ago we commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway where the United States won a defensive battle for possession of Midway Island, ending the Japanese offensive. But here, at Guadalcanal, the first major offensive of the war was won against the Japanese Empire. This costly victory was a pivotal turning point for Allied forces. It was the beginning of our relentless advance that would ultimately lead to victory in the Pacific and would finally end World War II.

For those of you here today, who were also here 70 years ago fighting on the seas, in the air, or on land, I salute you and I thank each of you for your example, sacrifice and dedicated service to our nations. Mr. Thomas Tituli, Mr. Alfred Bisili, Mr. Edward Lumani, Mr. Eroi Kumana, and Mr. Walt Bratten who survived the USS Cushing sinking and who also fought at the Battle of Midway, thank you for your remarkable service and courage under the most challenging warfighting conditions. Your contributions remain as cogent examples for our forces today. For those that bled here and that died here, our nations will forever honor their memory and their ultimate sacrifice. All of you have bestowed a tremendous legacy to our grateful nations and to the world.

Now, 70 years after the start of this great campaign, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Solomon Islanders are again gathered here. This time not in conflict, but in peace and remembrance, and as always, friendship. Much of our success in this theater over the last 70 years is due to the strong and sustained relationships between each of our nations. A legacy that

our veterans of World War II bought us with their sacrifices. Let us continue to honor them, by continuing to work together in the Pacific as partners, committed to a common cause that benefits everyone.

Today, as the United States whole of government re-focuses to the Asia-Pacific, our naval and military commitment to this vital region will endure. Just like the Solomon Islands, the United States is a maritime nation dependant on the sea. My Sailors in ships, submarines and aircraft continue to be ever present, perhaps just over the horizon, sometimes on shore, but always there, providing maritime security in the Pacific with Allies and partners. Our prosperity and security are dependent on the freedom of movement of commerce enabled by forward deployed naval forces working together today with like minded nations.

Today, the crew of the guided missile destroyer USS Sampson is proud to be here to participate in this important commemoration as they continue their deployment. This destroyer and her crew are representative of the Naval forces in the Pacific postured today to deter conflict and ready to respond if deterrence fails respectful of the legacy of the battles that took place here. I hope as many Sailors as possible from Sampson have had the opportunity to meet World War II veterans, Walt Bretton, and to hear his story. Sir, your legacy lives on as we sail about the Pacific today.

For more than seven decades, the United States has enjoyed a strong and resilient friendship with the people of Australia, New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. We have worked together to maintain peace and prosperity in the region and we look forward to continuing our strong relations for the next 70 years and more. The United States International Affairs team I have traveled with to get here had the unique experience to visit Tarawa, Peleliu, and Solomon Islands on this trip seeing the vivid indications of the hardships of warfare the Allied team experienced during World War II. Having witnessed this, I hope and pray our respective nations will not forget the legacy here and will remember what it takes to defeat a determined enemy as we look to address the uncertainties of the future.

Thank you and God bless each of you and the nations we represent.